Gospel Pictures
and other Poems

A. Walsh, O.S.A.

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AND OTHER POEMS

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By
The Rev. A. WALSH,
O.S.A.

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Imprimatur.

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,

Vic: Gen:

Westmonasterii,

die 9 Novembris, 1922.

Printed in England

Suis, Sodalibus, Amicis

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GOSPEL PICTURES

THE RETURN

"He passed over the waters and came into His own country." (Matthew ix, 1.)

HE rode of old, upon the storm's high wings,
Passing in mightiness to all His ends;
And now a little boat the Master brings
To home and waiting friends!

So stooping to the smaller ways of man,
He shows how truly He is Mary's Son;
Working out fully the redeeming plan
By which the world was won!

Behold Him bend above the palsied bed;
He sees behind the screen of human pain
The deeper wounds, unknown, unuttered,
And healeth them amain!

The eyes that tremble in a waning faith,
The heart that hardens 'neath life's sordid stress,
The hand that closes in the creeping death
Of greed and selfishness:

He heals them all with His sufficing word:
And then His charity stoops farther down;
The waters of His pity are outpoured
On nerve and aching bone!

For He is Lord of soul and mind and sense,
By Him each creature is and moves and lives,
And His the still diviner competence
That cancels and forgives!

Ah! little lake, than the great seas more blest,
As on thy paths, all white with flowers of foam,
Thou bearest Jesus on thy trembling breast,
Bringing the Saviour home.

JESUS THE GUEST

(Luke vii, 36.)

I.

I TOO was of the guests in Simon's house
With learned scribe and lordly Pharisee;
No laugh rang out, no murmur of carouse,
For He was with us—He!

We shrank before the lightning in His eyes;
We, conscious, waited for the smiting word;
We gazed as men look at the chargèd skies,
Crouching before the Lord.

John came, I thought, and nor used wine nor
bread—
His dead eyes first beheld a human revel—
He lived aloof; we scorned and wonderèd,
And, baffled, called him devil.

He eats and drinks, yet His sole name sufficed
To fill our hearts with hate and fear and shame;
What ails us? then I turned and saw the Christ,
And felt my soul aflame.

2.

I saw a shadow flutter at the door;
A woman entered from the outcast street;
I watched her as she crossed the glistening floor
To weep upon His feet.

She struck our heavy sense with perfume rare
Drawn from its shining sheath of alabaster,
Then wiped with the gold towel of her hair
The tired feet of the Master.

Loud voices rose in anger and derision,
" His spell is broken, and His teaching vain;
He has no seer's sense, no prophet's vision,
Who knows not Magdalen."

He softly said: Thy sins are all forgiven.
Then Simon spoke—what matters all the rest;
I only know I caught a glimpse of Heaven
When Jesus was our Guest.

March 8th, 1914.

ST. MATTHEW

(September 21st.)

"He saw a man sitting in the Custom house, named Matthew; and He saith to him: Follow Me. And he arose up and followed Him." (St. Matthew ix, 9.)

I.

I OFTEN tell the story to the churches;
My Gospel, too, has put it plainly down:
Perhaps the pain of telling it may purchase
My freedom and my crown.

And Mark and Luke with gentle tenderness
Have told it duly, but they veil my name.
I am that Matthew, but I will confess
My glory and my shame.

Far from His path was all my youthful living,
Within me for His love there was no place:
I heard Him speak and there was no believing
Until I saw His face.

He gave me hearing when He deigned to call,
And in a flash of light my soul was hallowed.
He whispered, "Follow Me," and, leaving all,
I rose up quick and followed.

2.

Wrapt in the work, self-centred, self reliant,
I sat at my hard desk dreaming of gain,
Frowning at every timid, trembling client
Who answered to my chain.

A gentle footstep falls upon the pavement,
And then I saw the Christ and heard His call:
One moment's sense of losing and bereavement,
Then rising I left all.

He callèd to my heart and gave me hearing,
His presence filled me with angelic joy;
He beckoned and I followed, nothing fearing
In His Divine employ.

I followed Him in work and prayer and fasting,
And I shall follow still through pain and death;
For well I know His vision everlasting
Will crown my waiting faith.

September 21st, 1915.

THABOR

I.

OVER His Divine beauty increate
The covering veil of sense unmoving lies;
All the high circumstance of His estate
Is hidden from our eyes.

Over His human face He meekly draws
The thicker veil of suffering, want, and loss;
He bows to all our nature's fallen laws,
And lies on every cross.

With hands and lips we see Him work and mourn,
He open bears the world's great weight of sin,
While Angels their adoring faces turn
To the true God within.

2.

He told them He would die, the Living Fount
Should parchèd be in the sad drouth of death;
And now He leads them up the Holy Mount
Of vision and new faith.

The hidden lights break thro' the holding sense,
Like lathèd gold His hyacinth hands shine;*
The meek eyes glitter with the radiance
Of His first day divine.

" 'Tis good to be with Thee, O Lord," they cried,
Our faith thrills in the light their vision gives:
'Tis good to know the Son of Man Who died,
The Son of God Who lives.

ZACHEUS

1.

HE comes, He comes, and some new longing fills
The coffers of my heart with rich desire;
My frozen spirit thaws and moves and thrills
Before His fire.

*Cant. v, 14.

I cannot rest, my money and my books
Their charm have lost for me this day of days;
Ah! blessed are the poor on whom He looks,
With whom He stays.

The crowds are hastening thro' lane and street—
Must I alone stay here and miss the grace?
No; I must kiss the ground beneath His feet,
Must see His face.

But I am low in body as in mind,
And how may I a place of vantage gain,
Whence I may see Him Who hath blest the blind,
Nor see in vain?

Would that my sycamore might gently stoop
And place me like a child on its high breast,
Then should I not be baffled of my hope,
But wholly blest.

2.

Safe in its arms, as if I were a child,
The giant tree has held me safe and high,
And thence I saw the Prophet undefiled,
Christ passing by.

He knows all things; He knew I watchèd there,
And, lifting up His voice, He called to me:
" Come down, Zacheus, and thy house prepare:
I sup with thee."

I threw myself adown the staying leaves
As if my soul were wingèd like a bird;
Kneeling in faith my spirit scarce believes
His blessed word.

I saw my gathering sins before me stand,
My hardened sense, my loathsome money-lust;
And could I dare to touch the blessed hand
Of the All-Just?

Then at His holy feet I lowly knelt,
And love and sorrow touched me as I fell;
In one grand moment there I knew and felt
Emmanuel.

March 8th, 1914.

ST. LUKE

(Feast October 18th)

I.

AMID the pomp and pride of Antioch
My eyes first open on the human day.
I haunt the schools, at every door I knock,
And doubting ask the way.

I touched the world and found it foul and wrong,
I searched the books and found them empty all:
I called to Grecian thought and Grecian song,
None answered to my call.

I closed my eyes and saw the light that gleams
In hours of rapture on the artist's sight:
I caught upon my brush the flash of dreams,
Then woke in the dark night.

I looked on suffering men and fain would learn
The art that bindeth wounds and easeth pain;
And pitying skill and merciful concern
Brought me not cure nor gain.

In all the boundless grace that maketh Greece,
In all the softness of this Asian nest,
Something is wanting that would make my peace
And crown my soul with rest.

2.

A light broke on the darkness of my way,
Hastening towards it I reach my goal;
Quick from the shadows walked I in His day
Whose radiance fills my soul.

His presence passed before I reached His place,
But on me fell His heritage of light,
All the rich glory of His vanished face,
Fell full upon my night.

I saw the Mother of the Eternal Word,
I heard her speak, I was so near her then;
And all the Grecian in my heart was stirred
To serve her with my pen.

I lived with men who heard His Gospel fall
Like manna, music on men's wondering ears:
Peter I knew, and was alone with Paul
Through his sad wander-years.

To me the highest place has surely come
Of all who through our speech have human glory,
For God through me in man's best idiom
Hath told His gospel story.

October 17th, 1921.

QUINQUAGESIMA

"*When He drew nigh to Jericho.*" (Luke xviii, 35.)

I.

"HAVE mercy, Lord," he cried, as Jesus passed,
"That I may see," he asked, and Jesus heard.
The living eyes one look upon him cast
And the dead eyes were stirred.

The night fell from them, and the Light of lights
Touched the dead sense, and lit the darkling place;
His eyes were opened to the sight of sights,
God's blessed human Face.

And then he heard the sacramental rite—
"Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole."
The dark eyes quiver with the borrowed light
Of a believing soul.

2.

And who can tell the mystery of the healing
When Jesus to our spirits draweth nigh—
The hearts that quiver with Diviner feeling
Because He passeth by?

How many turn their dead eyes at His passing,
And, sudden, see what faith can only know:
How many follow Him with praise and blessing,
Like him of Jericho?

The mystic lights of the Evangel's pages
On all the roads of life forever fall.
Our Master draweth nigh to all the ages,
Blessing and healing all.

February 15th, 1915.

THE MOTHER OF GOD

IMMACULATE

IN time's roseate morn,
When earth sighed for a King
To rule its way,
Then to its throne was born,
A wondrous, moulded thing
Of mind and clay;
For His fair soul God's finger wove
A radiant robe of light and love.

Beautiful, but frail!
His wavering passions cling
To nearest sweet.
His soaring pinions fail
And earth beholds its king
Low at God's feet.
Where now the bright robe God had given,
Gold-woven in the looms of heaven?

Precious it was laid in
The wardrobe of the stars
Until the day
Of her, the promised maiden,

Whose soul no passion mars,
All white her clay.
As soft it folds her, angels see
Red Golgotha's all-saving Tree.

December 14th, 1913.

THE MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL

In the year 1467, on the 25th April, the image of Our Lady of Good Counsel came from Scutari to Genazzano, a little town in the province of Rome. The Moslem power had overrun Dalmatia, and the lovely legend affirms that the miraculous picture was carried by angelic hands among the simple faithful of Latium.

I.

SEE it radiant come
From its Orient home—
All roads lead to Rome!

Orient pencil drew
What it saw and knew—
Mary's picture true.

Sad, ah! sad, the tale—
Faith and vision fail—
Mary draws her veil!

Can the Mother rest:
See again the quest
For the Sole and Best!

Now the search is done,
Here the stainless one
Finds again her Son.

Here she gracious stays;
Here thro' length of days
Love to her and praise.

2.

Face that from the skies
Fell on mortal eyes—
Virgin fair and wise!

Wisest Virgin blest
More than all the rest—
Lo! Christ on her breast!

On thy virgin face,
Glory of our race,
Rests the Spirit's grace.

Paradisal bird,
Thou hast upward soared
Nearest to the Word.

Tell us what you see—
Teach us that we be
Wise and blest like thee.

GOOD COUNSEL

NEAREST who art of all that God hath made
To His eternal heart of love and light,
Ask Him send into the chasms of my night
His starshine, and make me walk unafraid;
No fear shall then upon my spirit be laid,
No phantom of this dark my soul shall fright,
No wayward wind shall cross my upward flight
If thou who knowest the way lend me thy aid.

Amid the doubt of life teach me to choose
The better path that leadeth to the best;
Give me the wisdom daring to refuse
The gifts that make who taketh poorer still;
Bring me thro' Counsel to the farther rest
Of souls whose freedom binds them to God's will.

April 29th, 1913.

THE ASSUMPTION

I HEARD the spirit of the earth to-day
Speak softly of a morning long ago
When a dead body in its keeping lay,
So vital still in all its true decay
That death's white ashes in it were aglow.
It lay one instant, one, enough to know
How cold its bed, then rose and sped away.

It was the body of the Virgin blest
That consecrated an unfillèd grave,
Earth thought its hard, unthinking, withered breast
Might pillow her, and keep the flower it gave:
"At least shall she lie as the mortal rest,
And o'er her rain will fall and tempests rave
Until, at last, she rises with my best."

So dreamed the dull earth when the Virgin's Son
Lay fast within the hewn rock's cold embrace,
As little knew it of the life of grace
That filled the body of the spotless one
Who wove for Life His robes of time and place.
Not death can stop the heart or cloud the face
Of one who such high ministry hath done.

MOTHER OF MERCY

MOTHER of Mercy she must be,
The Mother of His virgin birth
Whose mercy, like a boundless sea,
Encircles all the earth.

Mother of Mercy she must be,
Who gave unto the Saviour Christ
The victim Flesh that on the Tree
His mercy sacrificed.

Mother of Mercy she must be,
Who from her sealèd fountain gave
The Blood that reddened Calvary
When Mercy died to save.

Mother of Mercy she must be,
Who brought God to our life of pain,
That Mercy's welling eyes might see
How weak is man and vain.

Mother of Mercy she must be,
And will be, until time is done,
For Christ is merciful, and He
Is ever Mary's Son.

September, 1916.

THE SAINTS

ST. AUGUSTINE

(Born A.D. 354. Died A.D. 430.)

(Feast August 28th.)

I.

1.

PRODIGAL nature fashioned him so;
Prince of the men who mightily know,
Heart for the high and heart for the low.

Opening ears as the siren sings,
Chasing the shadows of phantom things,
Feeling the pain of broken wings.

Drinking life's cup to its last lees,
Master of work, lover of ease,
Strong as the wind, deep as the seas.

Golden his speech, diamonds his eyes,
Humanly high and foolishly wise,
Near to the earth, far from the skies.

2.

Hero of God, martyr of grace,
Seraph of heart, angel of face,
High at the goal, meek in the race.

Master of truth, lord of the pen,
Poor of the poor, boundless of ken,
Lover of Christ, lover of men.

Dead to delight, quick to aspire,
Chastened of sense, spirit of fire,
Lowly his mien, high his desire.

Golden his speech, diamonds his eyes,
Prophet of God, holily wise,
Pilgrim on earth, home in the skies.

August 28th, 1917.

II.

HIS life was launched amidst tempestuous seas
Flowing upon him from the stormy heart
Of him who knew at once his pagan son.
The depths of unredeemed humanities
He early knew, and took his willing part
Of life's great risks ere life was well begun.

His soul and body creak beneath the stress,
The masts of life shriek in the hurricane,
And the high waters chant their song of death:
Sudden the seas, in hush and gentleness,
Adore the waking Christ Who once again
Saves His elect on dark Genesareth.

Then round life's circling coasts his keel he turns,
He sees the reefs below, the stars above,
And maps his vision on the chart that stays.
At the cold poles of thought his heart still burns—
But most he sails the tropics of God's love,
And endeth there the voyage of his long days.

August 29th, 1916.

III.

"Quis ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens."

WHO is this man who from the desert's sands
Comes forth apparelled in such affluence:
His Tyrian robes, his fine and jewelled hands,
His kingly mien and perfect sense

Of life, of men, of books, of everything—
Who is he, and whence comes his presence all;
Of unexplaining past, like Salem's King,
Or with a sundered past like Paul?

He is Augustine, of St. Monica the son,
In whom two worlds mysteriously have met:
The dawn of Christ had in his soul begun
Ere the dark day of error set.

Two beams were stretched across the Afric home,
And met in his contrasted gain and loss,
One grew in the hard soil of pagan Rome,
And one anear Christ's blessed Cross.

Behold him stretch one strong hand to the skies,
And with the other clutch earth's abject things;
While lowest longings glitter in his eyes,
His ears are touched by Angels' wings.

He knew the Christian's sovereign affluence
Lifting him high above earth's sordid needs;
And lived the while the mendicant of sense,
Leaning upon its broken reeds.

On furthest peaks of thought behold him stand,
No subtlest law evades his eagle eye;
And yet a wave of passion's fatal wand
Can cast him from the highest sky.

So high, so low, held fast in rival hands;
He cannot hit nor wholly miss the mark;
Cast up, cast down by ever shifting sands;
Buffeted at once by light and dark.

Then in the scales God threw His hidden weights,
And all but God for him lost living worth;
He hears the great voice that emancipates
From the low retinue of earth.

He sees into the treasure-house of truth,
And tells the world the vision of his eyes.
He quenches all his spirit's fever drouth
With the soft rainfall of the skies.

He puts on the high mien of those elect
Who are the freemen of God's city free;
No solecisms of error or of sect
Can mar the speech of such as he.

This is the man who from the desert's sands
Comes forth to-day clothed in affluence;
God's lights shine on his robes and jewelled hands,
Upon his soul and chastened sense.

ST. MONICA

NO sweeter story, Monica, than thine,
Is left us in the annals of the years;
Of human things it speaks, and of divine,
Of rapture and of tears.

We see thee 'mid the glooms and lights of home,
And hear beloved voices once again,
We see thee lonely in the streets of Rome,
And feel thy exile's pain.

We see thee face to face with life and duty,
Winning to God thy husband's stubborn heart;
We see thee, clothèd in thy mystic beauty,
Do well a mother's part.

Thy son is thine, who gavest him to earth,
And thine his heart, so tender and so human,
And he is thine by right of better birth,
O strong and valiant woman!

The early lights that shine upon his youth
Are but the radiance of thy motherhood,
And thine is every shaft of Christian truth
That warmed his pagan blood.

Thy voice unto his heart of Jesus spoke,
And cast that Name into its furrows deep,
And thine the rainfall of the tears that woke
The seedling from its sleep.

And thine the weary feet, that for his sake
Trudged by him through the night-time of his dole,
And thine the eyes that saw the morning break
Upon his darkling soul.

And thine the heart that one with his in love
Once watched beside the Tyrrhene sea at even,
And, soaring earth and purple sea above,
Beheld, one moment, Heaven!

And thine the life that in such rapture closes,
All mindless of the grave that holds the dust
Which, far from home, in Christian hope reposes,
To rise with all the just.

AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS EPISCOPUS LOQUITUR

MY life began upon a battlefield
Where two embattled hosts waged daily war.
My father, clothèd in the armour bright
Wherewith the smithies of the pagan age
Sent him into life's fateful field to fight
For all the near ideals of a world
Where flesh was combatted with hidden hosts
Of high desire and spiritual unrest,
My father brought this war into our home
And strove with voice and hand and influence
To plant the flag of sense upon our souls.
He was withstood in daily acts of war
By the sweet silences of her who knew
The conquering tactic of the beatitudes,
By his sweet wife, my mother Monica!
I saw them meet and struggle day by day;
My heart was hers, my blood was on his side.
Within me the dark weapons of my race
Armed me, and with a force stronger than I
My soul was urged to take my stand with him
And run death's peril in his company.
And yet, and yet, there was within me, too,
A something higher, a nature better touched.

It loathed the craven victories of sense,
And lifted me at times up to the heights
Where Christ was crucified and His strong Hands
Were stretchèd out to save a doomèd world.
I saw the fortune of the battle turn;
The meekness of God's handmaid won the day.
I saw my father lie in death, and o'er him stood
The Image of the Son of Man. I knew
In this one Soul there lay the symbol clear
That Christ had conquered and was all divine.
But war was still my lot. It raged and burned
Within my veins and on the hidden fields
Of mind and will and subtle consciousness.
Dreadful the shock and terrible the pain,
And all was sudden lost and sudden won.
The agony of thought, the wounds in self-respect,
Made all my being one wide gash of pain.
I fell so low, I tabled with the swine;
The charm and beauty of my spirit was lost
And the fine lineaments that make a man.

No strengthening certitudes remained to bless—
The things afar and near were but as ghouls
And shadowy things that walk the walls of night.
The battle went against body and soul

And all my being lay formless and foul
Before the victor gates of angry heaven.
Then a new something came into my heart.
After the fevered sleep and horrible dreams
I woke and found my Mother's gentle face
Radiant and loving bending over me,
And then I knew that peace had come at last.
A sudden feeling ran through all my veins,
A deep mysterious consciousness that I
No longer was the man I knew for me.
Out of her tears a son was born to her
And she who bore me into life's distress
Now gave me the new life where all is gain.

And then I put upon myself the armour new
That God had fixed for me in love and grace.
And still my lot was war, a soldier ever,
Forever I must be, doomed to the march
And danger and the want of all content
That is the soldier's one essential cross.
I fought them all who dared to lift their crest
Against my Lord and Master, Christ the Son:
I fought His fights and in His strength I won.
I broke His enemies with His Word and set
His freeing chains upon the world's tired feet.

To Him the glory and to me the waiting hours
Wherein I watch for the sweet call to rest.
And now I hear Him come, His footfall rises
Above the noise of war, above the shriek
Of death, above the turmoil of the heavy air.
He comes, I know He comes, and here I am,
Stretched on my rocking bed, old and forlorn,
Amid the ruins of the world I loved,
Amid the ruins of the world I made,
No orator now, no man of words, but still
A fighter in His cause and to the end.
Beaten and broken and encompassed all
By all that men will call utter defeat,
And yet, and yet, victor and Master here
Amid death's shadows in this chaos hour,
I cry to men and angels: to dear, dear friends
Whose flowing tears are my vain requiem:
And to these other men who still will hear
My dying voice across the centuries
When I am buried in the earth I loved:
Augustine lived and died Christ's soldier true:
Heading the hosts of truth he fighting fell:
He kept the faith in the sustaining hope
That in the Kingdom of His Master's peace
His lowly heart might wear the victor's crown.

ST. PATRICK

A REFLUENT wave of war
Threw into Irish soil a Roman flower,
It kept 'mid Northern dark
Its radiant dower;
A little spark
Of peace kindled by Thor!

It fed upon the soil
That 'round its roots gave it an alien bed;
It loved the lowly earth,
The sky o'erhead,
The while its birth
Made all its exile toil.

And then a wind of grace
Back to its native soil the flower hath cast;
And it inherits all
Its stately past;
The spell of Gaul,
The charm of home and race.

Now in its chalice lies
New perfume from the gardens of the King;
Its petals gleam as white

As angel's wing,
Its heart is bright
As souls beyond the skies!

And then the Spirit's breath
Bears this full flower back to Erin's shore,
Where openeth its breast
For evermore,
Breathing of rest
And hope that killeth death.

ST. AGNES

(Virgin and Martyr. Feast January 21st.)

A LITTLE martyr maid
Sees Jesus passing by:
"Be not afraid,"
He said, "'tis I."

She answered, "Nor knife
Nor rack nor death I fear,
For Thou art life,
And Thou art here.

" I love Thee, Saviour, King,
And know no love beside;
So frail a thing
I am Thy bride.

" Thou art my cup, my food,
In Thee my chains are free—
How sweet, how good
To die for Thee.

" My blood is a gold ring
That seals my plighted word;
Haste death, and bring
Me to my Lord."

Death hears her cry of love,
And, free, she flieth home,
The white-winged dove,
Agnes of Rome.

And when the trembling maid
Saw Jesus throned on high,
" Be not afraid,"
He said, " 'tis I."

Senior Novitiate Library

ST. COLUMBA

(Feast June 9th.)

I.

HIS blessed life began what time the dawn
Filled up our skies with the first flush of grace.
He looked up when the latticed skies were drawn,
And day fell on his face.

The charm of Celtic life shaped all his thought;
The dreams of Erin kindled his soul's fire;
His golden youth Christ's master-hammer wrought
To His divine desire.

He waited in our schools for Wisdom's smile,
And gladly knelt to kiss her jewelled hand;
He loved the distant things of God the while
He loved his own dear land.

Then in his cup a drop of nature falls,
At his command men drew the crimson sword:
The voice of Earth unto his spirit calls,
His human heart is stirred.

Quick o'er his heart the winds of sorrow sweep;
A lasting grief redeems his passing wrong;
Sin's shadow shrouds his vigil and his sleep.
Hushèd his harp and song.

2.

He quits the land he loves, and heaving seas
Between him and his past relentless roll;
The scarlet hyssops of his penances
Asperge the stricken soul.

The South wind sobs as Erin to him cries;
His trembling curragh hastens to her strand;
On her sad face he turns his bandaged eyes,
And clasps her unseen hand.

He walks in tears beneath her skies of blue,
Blessing the kneeling race he loved so well,
And sudden gladness comes to her anew
Beneath his holy spell.

His drooping wings bear him from Inisfail,
To die beside Iona's restless surge;
The South wind mourned the Dove-Saint of the Gael;
The ocean sang his dirge.

Now from the golden islands of the blest
His open eyes look down on Erin's shore:
The Dove still hovers o'er his Irish nest,
And guards it evermore.

ST. MARTIN

(Feast November 11th.)

NOW when the whole world pants with thoughts of war
We need be told what warriors should be.
Can saints of God ride in the cannon's car?
Can fort and trench encircle Calvary?

The God of battles has not changed His name,
And men may serve Him with the righteous sword;
Give a good cause and conscience pure of blame,
And soldiers, too, are servants of the Lord.

See one to-day before the altar stand
Whose seraph soul knew never fear or taint,
Who for his King fought with a holy hand,
Martin, the soldier once, and now the saint.

Clothèd in shining armour he goes forth
Valiant, and true to duty's trumpet call:
No deed of shame can dim his knightly worth,
No shadows of the field upon him fall.

He stoops in gentleness to the beggar's need
And halves with want the martial cloak he wore,
While Christ stood by, and in the noble deed
Blest every Christian sword for evermore.

And Martin grew in holiness and grace,
As in the serried ranks he fighting stood:
His valiant soul is called to nearer place
Beside the King of kings Who loves the good.

Who sang the rugged litanies of war
Now stands within the singing courts of God;
A jewelled mitre crowns the son of Thor
And his tired feet with peace and love are shod.

And all the strength of camp and battle-field
Now win the soldier higher, holier fame,
For he becomes the buckler and the shield
Of all who suffer for Christ's holy Name.

Soldier of Christ, no peril of life he feared,
And in the viewless battle at life's close
Above the noise of human pain is heard
His cry of victory and glad repose.

His heart was pure, his ears were pierced with faith
And ere he died he heard the angels sing;
Glorious in living, glorious in his death,
True man of God, true soldier of the King.

November 11th, 1914.

SANCTA LUCIA V. M.

(Feast December 13th.)

VIRGIN of Syracuse! unconscious Saint,
St. Agatha to thee thyself reveals!
In thine, as in her hands the grace that heals
Thy mother's pain and soothes her anguished plaint.

From thy child lips the spirit's accents come
Thy strength is Christ's own mild omnipotence,
The fires of love so penetrate thy sense
Thou heedest not the heats of martyrdom.

Death slowly came and in its last delays
Sees thee still steadfast, mistress of thy pain,
Gazing prophetic on the blessèd days
When Christ, the Prince of every peace, should reign.
The light of life was on the flashing sword
That made thee virgin-martyr of the Lord.

August, 1921.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

CHRISTMAS

HE came into a world whose heart was set
On power and empire, joy and endless feast;
He was the Lord of all great things, and yet
He chose the very least.

He might have come when earth and air were warm,
And the broad sky with summer fires ablaze;
He came when pale suns, flickering in the storm,
Scarce lighted the short days.

He might have had a palace for His home,
Studded with amethysts, roofèd with gold,
Lit up by ringèd planets; He is come
Into a stable cold.

He might have chosen, in jewelled crown arrayed,
A royal mother for God's Kingly Son;
And now the lowliest creature He hath made
Becomes the chosen one.

He might have summoned Kings, and bade them bring
Their prostrate homage to His infant feet;
And lo! but beasts and outcast lifeless thing
His noiseless coming greet.

He might have all creation's spirit stirred
With one loud gospel-cry of grace and might;
But He has willed to be the Silent Word
Born in the silent night.

He came not for our gifts but for our sakes—
Taking the lowliest things, the best He gave;
He giveth Life of Life, and meekly takes
A crib, a cross, a grave.

December 21st, 1913.

CHRISTMAS DAY

FROM highest heaven's lucent heights
The Lord of All is meekly come,
To make in our short days and nights
A new and blessèd home.

Why has He passed each sun that burns
Its incense near His sacred place,
And chosen our earth that, restless, turns
On its dark bed of space:

This sphere that borrows all its day,
And owns no vesture but the night;

Whose wealth is but a little clay
  Glinting with alien light:

Whose heart beats but as it is drawn
  By the strong hand of stellar force;
Its evening glow, its flaming dawn
  Owning no nearer source

Than the rich worlds that round it roll,
  Bright furnaces of cosmic fire,
Whose transient vision fills man's soul
  With wondering desire?

Ah! He is come, and rightly come,
  Through the bright maze of stars, to earth,
And rightly chose a human home
  For His assumèd birth!

For He hath made Himself a house
  Nor sun nor star could ever give,
Whose spacious littleness allows
  The Lord of life to live

A life that still is all divine,
  And yet is measured out of ours—
Feeling the warmth of food and wine,
  Smelling the fragrant flowers:

That gives a creature's very heart
To know a creature's joy and pain;
Who knew things from their endless start
Now knows them new again!

No flaming orb in radiant space
Could bind the Eternal with its years,
Too far aloof for tenderness,
Too bright for pitying tears!

For empty roll these shining cars:
No birth, no life, no cross, no grave,
No mother's breast in the white stars,
No fallen man to save!

And, therefore, is He rightly come
Where He can live and love and bless,
The same as in his Father's home,
And, without losing, less!

To Him be praise and honour given,
Our Lord, our Christ, our Holy One;
Before the day-star born in heaven,
To-day the Virgin's Son.

December 25th, 1912.

NEW YEAR

ONCE more in the lit Stadium of Space
Our tireless planet's victory in vain
Whispers to her: "Quit now the perilous race
Nor tempt the course again."

Bright and unbroken is her viewless car,
And cold her axle as when time began;
Away she speeds through dust of sky and star
Gladdening the soul of man.

Forever with his thought's unwearied eyes
He sees earth's chariot cleave the endless blue;
Nor doubts to-night that through the hushed skies
The race begins anew.

December 31st, 1913.

EASTER

THREE crosses stand across the lurid sky
Upon the heights of Calvary's fated hill;
Earth shakes with sorrow, and dark terrors fill
The hearts of those who doomed our Life to die.
The prophets' voices are fulfilled, the cry
Of Him Who died proclaimed the perfect will
Of God accomplished, and the night is still
As in the grave they lower the Most High.

Three days His body lies within the tomb
The while His soul, on mercy's errand borne,
Doth bless the just who wait in nether gloom:
But now Death's gates are from their hinges torn,
And sunshine bursts into his narrow room;
For Christ is risen on this Easter morn.

EMMAUS

THEY knew Him not when, on the doubting road,
They listened to His speech divinely wise;
The while their hearts within them strangely glowed,
Something still held their eyes!

They knew Him not when, at their journey's end,
He tarried with them as their bidden guest;
They only saw in Him the stranger friend
Who needed food and rest!

When, in the gathering dark, the meal was spread,
He blessed it with His consecrating Word;
Then, sudden, in the breaking of the bread
They knew their hidden Lord!

April, 1911.

VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS

COME, O Spirit! Fill our eyes
With the radiance of Thy home:
Throw Thy day across our skies,
Veni, come!

To our dark and deepening night
Come, Thou, Promise of the Word.
Come, Bright Source of love and Light,
Veni, Lord!

Peace hath broken her lamp of gold,
Be our Light in the thick dark:
Who can stay Thy hand, or hold
Thy giv'n work?

Sea on sea, and sky on sky,
Soul on soul in hate is hurled;
Holy Spirit, hear our cry,
Save the world.

Sorrow knocks at every door,
Every vein of feeling bleeds;
Loving Father of the poor,
Bless who needs.

Tears are falling everywhere
For the young, the brave, the best:
Veni, Veni, Comforter,
Come, Sweet Guest.

Hearts are hardened in this stress,
Souls are wounded by this sword:
Heal them with Thy tenderness,
Sovereign Lord.

Love is stiffening into hate,
Faith is dying of our pain:
Lord, Lord Thou alone art great,
All else vain.

Pity us, O Lord! and give
Of Thy strength and endless store.
In Thee, of Thee, let us live
Evermore.

Pentecost, 1915.

PENTECOST

THE tongues of fire that on the fiftieth day
Fell on the Spirit's sons, we now beseech
That they come down on all who dare to preach
The only name of Him to whom men pray—
The only name which can forever stay
Within all human suffering's palsied reach,
And sole the penetrating gospel teach
That into every cleft of life makes way.

Come, tongues of fire, and make it audible;
The world will sudden pause, and, looking up,
Know from above comes light that is the best;
Then God's thoughts of us will be credible,
His chalice sweeten sorrow's constant cup,
And life in Him be hallowed, and death blest!

Pentecost, May 26th, 1913.

IN JUNE

"Ignem veni mittere in terram." Luke xii, 49.

THROUGH all the livelong summer day
The sun throws down his gift of fire;
The four winds round the faggots play
And fan their innermost desire
To warm to life earth's dormant things—
The rose's bloom, the pupa's wings.

Each hour the fire gathers new force—
The meadow's heart is all aflame;
The tree-tops mark its widening course;
Even in man's own soul and frame
The fire is visibly alight—
New thoughts, new words, new dreams, new sight.

Ah! Lord, didst Thou not also come,
The Orient from the highest high,
Didst Thou not cast Thy fire therefrom,
And bid it, gendered in the sky,
When kindled by the Spirit's breath,
Bear life into this house of death?

Thy word fell like a meteor
  Out of the hot sun of Thy Heart;
No answering fires within us stir,
  No spirit flowers upward start
To show that sleeping souls have heard
The warming gospel of Thy word.

Are we so cold that even Thou
  Must fail in setting us afire?
Come in this June-tide, Lord, come now,
  And kindle in us Thy desire:
Bind fast the sun to Thy intent,
Making him Thy Heart's sacrament.

IN FESTO PRETIOSISSIMI SANGUINIS

(First Sunday in July.)

O PRECIOUS Blood, whose sacred Stains
  The red gold of my ransom paid
When Christ my Lord put on my chains,
  And in my stead was Captive made—
  Death's Captive in His creature's stead!

O precious Blood, I lowly bow,
And Thy blest Chalice I adore;
Ah! wash me in Thy mercy now,
Thy saving Chalice on me pour,
And cleanse me, sinner, more and more.

The pride of life has made me thrall,
The soil of earth is on my heart;
To gain a little I lose all,
I risk the whole to gain a part,
But freedom, beauty, all Thou art!

Yes! all in Thee I find again
Life's farthest height and width and breadth:
O cleanse me in Thy sacred rain,
Thou sweetest mystery of my faith,
Thou joy of life, Thou balm of death!

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD

WHILE autumn winds are blowing
Over the ebbing tide,
The dying year is going
Where the dead years abide.

The tirèd sun is setting
  Before our blood is warm,
And sullen men are fretting
  'Mid rain and cold and storm.

Our day and night dreams over,
  We waken in the dark,
To know that grey skies cover
  Dead fields and songless lark.

We know the cheat of living
  'Mid spectral gleams of bliss
To find, at last, life giving
  This wage, and only this.

Yet life is crowned by dying,
  And earth's best boon the grave,
Where saints in peace are lying,
  Silent in hope, and brave.

They hear no death-winds blowing,
  They hear no ebb-tide moan;
They rest in glory, knowing
  How Jesus loves His own.

November 11th, 1913.

AD TE LEVAVI

GOD, to Thee I lift my eyes
The while I do my daily task;
Suppliant, I bow my head.
Mendicant, I ask and ask
That Thou send me from Thy skies
My vital crust of daily bread.

God, I empty my low sense
Of every dear and false delight,
Suppliant I ask Thee fill
Touch and hearing, taste and sight,
With the void that sends me hence
To the high service of Thy Will.

God, I lowly bend me down
And cast my soul before Thy feet.
Suppliant I pray Thy might:
Send me bitter, send me sweet,
Send me cross, or send me crown,
If only Thou be my delight.

God of Mercy, bless my days,
My days of barren joy and sorrow:

Waft Thy quick seed from above,
  Breathe upon each empty furrow;
Thine the blossom of my praise,
  And Thine my golden sheaves of love.

VENITE AD ME

NOW His door is open wide
Do not fear to be His guest,
Hear Him calling: "Enter in,
Ye who bear the load of sin;
Tired with passion, mocked with pride,
Come into My house and rest!"

Who would close his raptured ears
To the piercing cry of grace:
See the portals open wide,
See the Saviour's open side,
See His Cross, His Blood, His tears—
Come into His holy place.

His breath gloweth like a fire,
He will warm your frozen hands,

He will clothe you with His grace,
All the radiance of His face
Falling on your cold desire
Maketh sweet His high commands.

Do not stay, the rain is falling,
Be the Saviour's bidden guest:
Leave the lonely, haunted night,
Hasten to the Light of Light;
Hear the Master calling, calling,
"Come, thou tired one, come and rest!"

VITAM VENTURI SAECULI

O CROWNING cry of Faith,
O last word of our creed:
When life is done and death,
Then we shall live indeed.

For this the Son was sent
To stoop beneath the skies:
For this each Sacrament,
For this all sacrifice.

When all the years are sped,
  When life and work are done,
The gate is openèd
  And truer life begun!

Through long days wet with tears
  We bear the yoke of pain,
Because beyond the years
  The better years remain.

Our spirits stand aglow
  Where life's cold ashes lie,
Because from God they know
  They shall not, cannot, die.

SONNETS

WHEN WE ARE OLD

" Il dì s'appressa, e non pote esser lunge;
Si corre il tempo, e vola."—Petrarch.

WHEN we are old, when you and I are old,
Shall we two feel the penury and stress
Of senses that grow hourly less and less,
Till, sudden, eyes and ears and hands lose hold
On light and music as on food and gold;
Will friends fail us, and all the tenderness
Which makes life sweet forget, at last, to press
Itself against our hearts ere they grow cold?

Nay, I am fain to think in other wise,
To us, will come the sunset of our years;
Through the dark void of sense faith sees the skies,
And the dear thought of men and women fond
Will shoot light thro' the clouds of pain and tears,
And speed us glad to fuller life beyond.

ANTINOMIES

WERE it not better if the course the seasons keep
Should mark the sowings and the reapings of the mind;
Then Winter might be loud with voices all unkind
And souls the while in fallow would unconscious sleep.
Should rain and snow fall on them in their furrows deep,
The seedling-thoughts would, patient, listen to the wind,
And, silent, shape the songs that wondering men will find
When Summer bids them forth in ecstacy to reap!

But no; it were not better that the seasons' moods
Their fetters gross should place on spirits' bounding feet;
Our souls have their own times, their own vicissitudes;
Thro' Summer days, it may be, poets hear no lark,
Song's fairest petals open to the driving sleet,
And longest thoughts will shoot across short days and dark.

VERBA CANTIONUM

The Words of Songs.

Psalm cxxxvi.—"*Super flumina.*"

IF perfect words were given to tongue and pen;
If thought could body forth its perfect form,
And the true effluence of the inner norm
Might come within the sense's grosser ken:
Not books nor speech were empty shadows then,
But in them suns would shine and blow the storm,
And suffering souls their famished hearts might warm
With songs that were the hopes of famous men!

But now such perfect words are all denied,
And life's great charm by men may not be sung.
Alas! that so rich spirits should have died
In the world's youth, nor in it ever found
To voice its early beauty, fitter tongue
Than what to utter silence giveth sound.

GEORGE WYNDHAM

(Died June 8th, 1913.)

FALLEN in the full flower of his age,
We mourn one of fine fibre all compact.
None asked a parchment vulgarly exact
To vouch his rights on life's broad acreage.
Can such have lived and died without his wage?
Master of subtle thought and stately fact,
What fatal something has this Hamlet lack'd?
Ah! Hamlets play sad parts on any stage.

He was of many strains amalgamate,
And many rivers harboured in his soul.
Him Celtic glow and Saxon sense of State
Made winning, aloof, wide and firm of reach;
And she who gave him instinct of high speech
Now hears a Paris belfry for him toll.

Dublin, June 11th, 1913.

SEASONS

TINNITUS AURIUM

WHAT ear can catch the subtle whispers of the seasons,
And tell in human words the message of the year
Who in his passage talks and sings and laughs and reasons,
If only we could hear?

When first his voice was heard it was a joy to listen,
The open ears of earth knew every word he said.
His cry of joy and hope made Nature's young eyes glisten,
And men forgot the dead.

When he spoke loud to them who tilled the opening furrows
Their hearts went dancing to the music of the field,
They saw the lengthening days, and in the brighter morrows
Saw all his wisdom sealed.

But when the summer faded and his voice grew weaker,
Then only prophets' ears could hearken to his word,

On hill and river scarce the failing, trembling speaker
Could make his utterance heard.

He tries to speak of hope, of vintages and reaping,
We guess his broken thought nor grasp its ready truth;
He speaks of harvests, but we gather them in weeping,
For light is gone and youth.

Ah! full of fallacy and tears the season's message!
The foolish year has now no oil to light its gloom.
He fashioned all this wondrous earth with joyous presage,
And built the while his tomb.

His promises were vain, and vain was our believing,
And all the voices that to listening spirits call
Are but the rhythmic beat of Time's soft shuttle weaving
The winding-sheet of all.

WINTER PASSES

WHAT meaneth this awakening of earth,
This morning movement in the house of things;
These kindling fires upon our planet's hearth,
This fluttering of wings

And songs of choristers in the light air?
What spirit moves in matter's soulless mass;
Is the dead heart of things itself aware
Of what cometh to pass?

Unconsciously the crocus dons her cloak,
Her saffron cloak, and steps into the sun;
No dream of joy the daffodils awoke,
Their lovely work is done

Without a glimmering sense of their own law;
The Winter's self in wonder at the hand
That wrote them the three fatal letters saw,
And may not understand

That its short reign of rigid rule is over,
And the Darius Spring is in its stead;
While we, the Daniels, their hid sense discover,
And know a King is sped!

O doomèd King, make haste with thy last feast
Within thy halls of mist and cloud and gloom;
See writ upon the high walls of the East
The fatal words of doom:

Mane,* the Lord hath numbered thy short days,
And finishèd their cold and empty span;
Thecel, He finds thee wanting as He weighs,
Short of the need of man;

Phares, He rends thy realm in twain and gives
Its crown to the high princes at thy gates:
To Spring that in thy palace reigns and lives,
While Summer bides and waits.

February 26th, 1913.

AGAIN!

Mutat terra vices.

I.

THE stage had long been empty and forlorn,
And all the theatre a ruin bare:
No one could think of violin or horn
Playing sweet music there.

*Daniel v, 23.

The lights were gone and all the laugh and shout
That follow comedy on its wild way;
The place was tragedy, inside and out,
And none sate at the play.

Then came the quick renewal of the house,
The dead walls thrill beneath the drama's spell,
And glad eyes sparkle in the soul carouse,
And hearts to music swell.

2.

Dismantled woods now tune their violins,
From sea to hill fresh fields rise tier on tier:
The play, of more than Attic charm, begins
In the house of the year.

Somewhere the actors wait their noiseless cue,
And calmly take the drama's coming stress,
For they can give each syllable its due—
Daring nor more nor less.

The year has leased the theatre of the Greeks,
Open to men and open to the sky;
There shall we see the buskined days and weeks
Act, speak, weep, laugh, live, die!

ALLA PIAZZA

In June.

1.

OUR Square before my window lies—
An open book it seems to me;
Its text is always in my eyes;
So clearly writ in flower and tree,
That I must read or be unwise.

2.

When Winter's sluggard dawns arise,
Where are the leaves and flowers and grass?
And where the glow of summer skies?
Where are the poet's songs while pass
The shadows o'er his seeing eyes?

3.

Now Summer speaks, and rich replies
Come from the lips of living things;
But the dead walls show no surprise,
Nor heed the songs the season sings—
So soulless men our songs despise!

4.

Girt round with all earth's panoplies,
We pass the point where Kings salute;
But, see! the pageant's glory dies—
Our Square is empty, leafless, mute!
Ah! I must read or be unwise.

AUTUMN

WHERE is it now, the white hand of the dawn,
That early drew the frail bolts of the night?
The year is dying and the blinds are drawn,
No Ave greets the light.

Where is it now, the strong heart of the day,
Whose beating marked the time for marching souls;
And where the vital glow that on us lay
And made us living coals?

And evening at her low door in the west,
Painting her lovely dreams upon the skies:
A grave in cloudland weighs upon her breast,
And closed are her eyes.

October 12th, 1915.

AUTUMN

I LEFT the city hard and comfortless,
And sought the fields where beeches stand and hold
Their harps unto the wind's musician touch,
I felt upon my face the soft caress
Of the dear year whose hand was growing cold
And knew the vanity of loving such!

The bare and shrivelled boughs held out their arms,
And called the birds to Autumn rendezvous,
And birds mistook the voice and thought it Spring;
But I, more wise, saw dead woods and waste farms,
And felt regrets for the dear things I knew
When youth shot thro' the veins of everything.

I walked on leaves late fallen and alive,
Their little groanings fill'd my feet with pain,
And as I pushed them dying into death
I paused, and vainly fancied I could shrive
The sins of things that in their pride are fain
To make of vision what is but faith!

WINTER SONG

O LEADEN skies, O sunless day
True types of sadness and of sin,
Upon my door-step you may stay,
But come not in!

For at my table, honoured guests,
Joy, Hope and Peace are sitting now,
And Summer's radiance still rests
On every brow.

Should'st thou come in, O Winter day,
Should'st knock and bow and take thy place,
Then surely Hope will run away,
And all life's grace.

And all the joy of life and work
From thy dark neighbourhood will shrink;
On what I do your fatal mark,
And what I think!

A hush will fall on speech and song,
And only I with you remain,
And even I shall vainly long
To break my chain!

O leaden skies, O sunless day,
Tax-gatherers of grief and sin,
Upon my door-step you may stay,
But come not in!

MISCELLANIES

THE BARN

THE poet's acres stretch afar,
He drains the swamp and hunts the height,
His fence, above, is cloud and star,
Below, the wattles of the night.

He reapeth all that he has sown,
Of weed and tare he maketh gain:
All he has suffered, dreamt, and done,
He heapeth on his homing wain.

To what safe keeping can he trust
His harvest threshed and winnowèd?
Closed to the silent thieving must,
Yet open to the hand of need:

He builds a barn on his own plan,
Of measured walls and perfumed floor,
And gives a key to every man
Who passes by the waiting door.

February 2nd, 1922.

ALTARIA TUA, DOMINE!

(Thy Altars, O Lord!)

"We found in some of the cities on our way churches whose foundations went back to Northmen of the eleventh century. They have been retouched, and, as it is said, restored, but the hard Danish hand is on them still. As so often happens, they are no longer in the service of the creed in whose name they were built. Lady chapels and altar niches tell of their initial uses. But now all these purposes are forgotten and linger only in names that are void of actual meaning. One wonders if those who now use them in another worship ever hark back to the facts of the historic reality. If so, one asks what their feelings must be like."—Book of Travels.

MIGHTY church, bereft, alone,
Christ in thee is turned to stone.
Thousands walk thy circling street,
Pavements throb with countless feet,
Thousands pass with open eyes,
Thou with all thy mammoth size
Scarce canst win a passing glance:
Rich and poor, all look askance
At thy windows' lovely fret,
At thy guardian parapet:
Hast thou naught for men who live,
Hast thou naught to give—to give?

Thou hast taken heavy toll
From the treasure of the soul
Of the centuries of faith:
Naught to life and naught to death,
Not a word hast thou to say,
Not a yea and not a nay.
Prodigal, where hast thou spent
Widow's mite and chantry rent?
Thou hast squandered all the price
Of ordered prayer and sacrifice,
None of thee a blessing craves,
Void thy aisles and locked thy graves.

Yet the Northmen built thee well—
High thy tower, sweet thy bell,
Soft thy deep and lengthened glooms,
Rich thy soil with storied tombs;
Famous artists in thee wrought,
Saints in thee have prayed and taught.
Many a sleeping prelate waits
For the opening of thy gates,
For the Tabernacle blest,
For the great, divinest Guest,
Who can fill thy aisles again
With devout, adoring men!

Now thy weeping walls are chilled
With the duties unfulfilled,
With the vacant emptiness,
With the unbelieving stress
Of the stark abomination,
Of the utter desolation
Of a holy sealèd place
Lost to blessing, lost to grace:
Where no favoured eyes can see
Sacrament and mystery:
Where forlorn the altars stand,
Scandals in a Christian land.

Northmen built thee to their will,
Northern legend haunts thee still.
Place a gargoyle on each spout,
Let the evil spirits out!
Weep thy ruin and thy loss,
Bring in Jesus with His Cross,
Bring in Mary pure of sin,
Martyrs, virgins, bring them in:
Go back to thy pristine state,
Holy be and consecrate:
Then shalt thou become again
House of God and home of men.

Senior Novitiate Library

QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS LOQUITUR

NON *omnis moriar,* all will not die
Of me; yes, I have put it quite that way;
And now you ask me what it really means.
Its sense is clear enough from that the poem
Proceeds to say, but should it come alone
To reader's lips its meaning will transcend
The measured thought that urged me on to write
The crowning song of my third book of odes.*
Now I am fain to fix its worth and tell
The truth I thought, bidding it careful stay
Within the narrow ambit I enjoined.
Yes, I can well believe my songs will live
And leap upon men's lips when I am dead.
Mine is the gift of catching into nets
Of meshèd words the flying facts of life.
I put them in the golden cage of songs
Which men will willing hang up in their halls
To fill their homes with musical comment
Upon the passing pageant out of doors.

But shall I live because my measured lines
Survived the lips that uttered them—shall I,
Or they, put on immortal life, and then still live

*Lib. iii, Carmen xxx.

When dear friends water with their tribute tear
The glowing ashes of their friend the poet?*
Yes, I have sung in fluent Latin verse
The men I met, the fountain on my farm,
The wine that hides in grapes and sparkles clear
In the full evidence of cups of gold;*
I touch off men of state in one smart line,
I flog the parasite with unbreaking rods
Of classic words—even more than this I do:

I call into my songs the sadness of things†
And bid men weigh the void which circles round
The little point of being that is ours.
I tell them not to urge the car too fast,
Lest that it rush into the empty spaces
Of wild desire where spirits lose themselves
In vainest striving with their destiny.
This deeper chord I often struck and I know
Its clear bell notes will evermore resound
Where weary men are grasping for the word,
The fine Horatian word, that clearly says
All can be said about the tragedy
Of grief and fruitless hopes that are our lives.
And types of men such as will always be
On streets, in courts, in baths, as long as man

* Lib. ii, Carmen vi. † Lib. ii, Carmen xvi.

Will herd with man that he may human be—
All these are in my pages and will live
As long as men need *my* light in their eyes
To see the truth of things withal—as long
As bound, lethargic tongues will need my words
To clothe their thoughts in closely fitting style;
All this shall live, but is this all the limit
Of that long life I fondly promise me?

If this is all then I shall surely die;
And when men carry my immortal song
Into the lasting world of living speech,
Horace, the poet, will be but a name,
Who only lives because some others live
And use the fadeless fibre of his thoughts
To bind their hearts into a better strength.

My vineyard feels its red heart glow to-day
Under the glowing glances of the sun,
It lives and beareth life in leafy grapes
That make one thirsty with the thought of wine.
But wait! Autumn is near and we shall see
Dark fingers pull the straining bunches down,
And heavy wains dragged by the stupid steer
Trample the pied leaves in the pergolas,

Carrying off to cruel feet and press
The beauteous grape; the men and women
Will turn their eyes away from the dead place
That late was pulsating with life and bloom:
Is this *my* fate! I had my day of life,
And songs burst from my brain in clusters fair
As luscious grape upon the vineyard's breast;
Must I grow bare and die, will men and women
Walk through my books and pluck my mellow grapes
Bearing them into the rough press of life,
Crushing them well into the wine that gladdens
The endless table of the coming times;
While I lie low and no one thinks of me!

Alas! that it should this wise be; for life,
Immortal life, is fittest crown for one
To whom the gods have given their full sense,
The poet's sense, of the true truth of things.
But who will give me sight when my blear eyes
Are blinded by the visible dark of death?
The gods are powerless, for what are they
But fine inventions of such men as I am?
We made them of our dreams, adding to sums
Of all-imagined worth still higher cyphers
Of goodness, beauty, virtue, potency;

We called the last creation of our minds
By names divine and bade them people heaven.
They cannot give me life for I have given
Of my own store to vitalize their creed.
Earth fed my vital flame, but the red spark
Was not her gift, nor can she of it give.
Maecenas loved me, but he, too, is late dead;
His face lives in my heart, his memory
Recalls his love, as my undying songs
Will make the future love my vanished name.

Nor skies, nor winds, nor seas; not wine, not love
Can give me the full gift of life.
My songs,
Live on while yet you may, but Horace dies.

GOLDSMITH'S GRAVE

(The Temple, London.)

I CAME through Fleet Street when the August
flush
Of sunset lit the weary City's eyes;
And near the pools of noise I found the hush
Where Goldsmith lies.

Among the Templars sleeps this truest Knight,
Who fought for noble things with virgin words;
His gentleness and radiant humour fight
Better than swords.

Listen! and hear his soft voice tell again
How life in all its phases should be done:
He opens with the gold tip of his pen
The gates of fun.

He shows in quiet ways of life and death
How men act ever in their human way;
His eyes see always the true height and breadth
Of every day.

He drew the veil that hid his country's wrongs,
And paid the patriot's tax of exile tears:
And all is true to type and all belongs
To all the years.

Wherever laughter lives, wherever grief
From human eyes tells sorrow's endless tale,
Wherever love lives on in fair belief,
His words avail.

The Traveller has found high hostel here,
Living and dead he ranketh with the best;
Never will evil hearing vex his ear
Or mar his rest.

Here Johnson came to bury his dead friend,
Here Burke's great rhetoric at last was dumb,
And here from overseas and land's far end
Pilgrims will come

And stand like me beside this sacred urn
To learn how lovely is a poet's crown,
To know how gentle genius still can earn
A rich renown.

He sleeps in glory where his work was done,
In death as in his life a lovèd name:
No Grecian sage, no Roman, ever won
Securer fame.

THE MEISTERSINGER

THE music in the throstle's throat:
A little song the Master wrote,
And truly His is every note!

The West winds touch the silent trees
And play soft summer symphonies:
The Master's hands are on the keys!

And hark, the vibrant clavecin,
Which throbs since history began
Beneath the artist touch of man.

What music riseth from the keys:
The Master's cosmic harmonies,
Or but the player's reveries?

FATHER TABB'S POEMS

1.

POEMS of the coming days
Will, I fancy, be as these;
Half a thought in half a phrase,
The rest in silences.

2.

Saying what things cannot say,
Blowing Nature's silent flute,
Drawing reason's roundelay
From earth's lips sealed and mute.

3.

Wheeling into clouded skies
  Half a moon-disc shadow-drest;
Knowing well the watcher's eyes
  Will see the hidden rest.

April, 1913.

LACHRYMAE RERUM

I HEAR the patter of the summer rain!
It seemeth like a crowd of slippered feet
Upon the lonely cloister of our street;
The footfall of the souls in waiting pain
Who, begging prayers, walk the earth again.

I hear the patter of the summer rain!
And all its lovely ministry I see
To parched grass and feverish leaf and tree;
And with the touch of gentle word am fain
Soothe every shrivell'd heart and aching brain.

I hear the patter of the summer rain!
The sobbing of the earth is in my ears;
I see the eyes of all things filled with tears:
And ask, are my contritions, too, in vain?
Has not the Christ my losses made my gain?

EL DORADO

THE poets go into the land of fairies,
And see the haunted hills and fabled shore,
Then tell a hungry world that somewhere there is
Le Pays d'Or.

They tell us mortals of the land elysian,
But leave us here while they to dream-land soar—
Alone they see in their exclusive vision
Le Pays d'Or.

They say, " Behold the fields of El Dorado "—
They give us words and nothing, nothing more.
Beyond us ever lies in darkling shadow
Le Pays d'Or.

The artist steps into the land of wonder,
And comes back laden with its precious store;
He brings with him to earth the radiant yonder
Le Pays d'Or.

Before his favoured eyes the elf-land stretches,
And while its riches on his spirit pour,
Thinking of us so poor he hither fetches
Le Pays d'Or.

And then we see how fair are angel faces,
How soft the feet that dance on heaven's floor,
And know for certain what a pleasant place is
Le Pays d'Or.

The poets see—nor heed the many voices
That haunt the Spanish Castles they explore:
No artist hears the music that rejoices
Le Pays d'Or.

But here is one who heard the gold harps throbbing,
And knows the songs of more than mortal lore
That fill with elfin laugh and eerie sobbing
Le Pays d'Or.

And when he touches viol, flute, or zither,
He plays the strains the fairies played before—
With all its joy of sound he bringeth hither
Le Pays d'Or.

L'Envoi.

But when these three go travelling together,
They read the life of dreamland to its core;
They know, in every mood of wind and weather,
Le Pays d'Or.

They hear the faint tattoo of fairy tymbal,
They glimpse Queen Mab beside her palace door,
And see thro' golden mists of word and symbol
Le Pays d'Or.

And when these three come back from El Dorado—
They come back now as in the days of yore—
Then we, too, see in truth, and not in shadow,
Le Pays d'Or.

THE RIVER

Labitur et labetur.

UNDER the bridge, over the weirs,
Down the steep shed of happy years,
Seeming to pass, yet fain to stay,
The river flowed by right of way
Thro' the high banks of night and day.

Its soul was all of music made,
And as it flowed its fingers played
A march for Winter's fighting King,
A minuet for dancing Spring,
A carol for the swallow's wing.

It knew me, too, in all my moods,
And to my freshets and my floods
It made a weird accompaniment:
It rose and fell, and equal blent
With doubt and fear and discontent.

When from my dream's high battlements
I saw Hope's white crusader tents,
The music of the river band
Was sweet as strings beneath the hand
Of troubadours from fairyland.

When in night's hushèd aisles I heard
The footfall of some phantom word,
A soft hand touched the river's keys
And woke Cathedral harmonies
That charmed life's listening mysteries.

Or life was low or life was high,
The minstrel watchèd ever nigh:
He askèd not the why or whence
Of phase of soul or mood of sense,
But played in sweet equivalence.

I left the river there, and went
Thro' city and thro' continent,

And never heard I other strain
So near to joy, so near to pain,
Nor hope to hear, to hear its like again.

And still I hear it faint and low,
Not near and clear as long ago:
For memory plays on muted strings
The flutter of departing wings,
The anthem of life's vanishings.

BROKEN WINGS

I.

WHICH the sadder thing:
Swallow breaks a wing,
Poet cannot sing?

See the maimèd lie,
While strong pinions fly
Up the terraced sky.

See the singer mute
Strike the stringless lute,
Blow the empty flute.

2.

Heal the broken wing,
Bid the poet sing,
Gladdest, gladdest thing.

Joy! the sudden flight
Through the dark to light
From the depths to height!

Poet's lips are stirred,
Poet's song is heard,
Joy! the wingèd word!

THREE WISHES

ONE evening in the sultry dark
That followed on a harvest day,
I passed by where the reapers' work
In perfumed bundles lay.

There was no sound of man or bird,
No wind awoke the sleeping leaves,
Only a whispering I heard
Among the golden sheaves.

And soon I saw amid the corn
Three little ears that stood apart;
Theirs were the voices softly borne
Into my listening heart.

The tallest of them proudly said:
"I shall be flour as white and sweet
As made the bread the Magi laid
At Jesus' blessed Feet."

The second whispered: "If I live
I shall be truly happy when
They make of me the loaf they give
To poor and hungry men."

Then spoke the smallest of the three:
"My wish is loveliest," she said;
"For I would one day love to be
A little altar bread."

SEEDLINGS

A LITTLE seedling softly falls
Out of the sweet heart of a rose,
And to the wind in falling calls,
The minstrel wind that singing blows,
And is uplifted in his hand
And borne away to fairyland.

A little fancy softly falls
Out of the poet's fragrant mind,
And, falling into silence, calls
To the soft words that, like the wind,
Murmur around his lips, and they
On swift wings bear it far away.

The seedling grew into a rose,
As sweet of heart as fair of face,
The poet's fancy lives and blows
Into a song that, in some place
Unperfumed by life's lovely things,
Sweetens who reads, gladdens who sings.

January 25th, 1913.

FRATRES MENDICANTES

LIKE lowly friars in the middle time,
The poets are men's honoured mendicants;
With gentle hand they ope
The generous heart of things.

They stand at the bright portals of the morn,
And watch day's postern in the growing dark:
"Give Morn," they ask, "thy joy,
And Night, thy tenderness!"

They bow before the storm-king's gleaming towers,
And meekly beg a faggot of his fire
To warm the frozen hands
Of loveless dreamless men.

They count the rough pulse of the city's heart,
And from it take the zest and charm of life;
They pray where dead men lie,
And take their silences.

So, murmuring their "Benedicite,"
They pass adown the endless street of things.
While at the open doors
The whole world stands and gives.

And when the quest is done they carry home,
Safe in the lowly wallet of their songs,
The benisons of men,
The charities of things.

THE POET'S DAY

WHEN in your calendar you meet
A poet's name, pass it not by;
Rise to its presence, gladly greet
A man not born to die.

His soul can nevermore be mute,
He sings forever in his songs;
The passing music of his lute
To every age belongs.

Through patient years he finely wrought,
His gains are thy inheritance:
The fairer love, the subtler thought,
The sublimated sense.

For this his lips were touched with fire;
To give thee heart to dream and strive,
To voice thy spirit's best desire.
To keep thy soul alive.

His love was the best love of man,
His words the finest jewels of speech,
From heaven to earth he arched the span
And bound them each to each.

His dreams were the best dreams of men,
Well woven out of dawn and dark—
Silks from the shuttle of his pen
To clothe thy life and work.

When comes his day kiss both his hands,
And say: Priest of life's mysteries,
Thou art God's breathing on all lands,
His beacon on all seas.

August 10th, 1921.

BANDUSIA

(Horace. Carmen, Lib. iii, 13.)

O LOVELY fountain, whose undying charm
Has found the safe eternity of song,
Once thou didst sparkle on one Sabine farm,
Once to one poet didst belong.

But now thy crystal waters glow and glisten
Wherever men one Latin singer know;
To thy sweet music now all poets listen
As Horace listened long ago.

The little wells that bless our little acres
Seem as if to thy lovely image made,
And all of thy high fortunes are partakers
And share thy master's accolade.

In Summer, when their cool breath fans our faces
We taste thy nectar shade, and dream we see
The gentle Roman as he smiling places
His fadeless crown of song on thee.

No drouth shall parch the lips of thy loud runnel.
As Horace saw thee, thou art always so;
Though weed and silence gather in thy channel,
Thou shalt for ever, ever flow.

Above the music of thy master's metre
We hear thy soft harmonics softly play.
His song is sweet, but to our ears far sweeter
The lyric of thy roundelay.

August 10th, 1921.

GLENDALOUGH

I CAME, a summer pilgrim, to a lake
Whose heaving heart some distant longing fills.
It tossed and shouted as if fain to break
The darkling prison of its iron hills.
The rain was falling and the chargèd air
Breath'd unavailing sadness everywhere.

The growing weight in me was human, too.
Reading the blurrèd text that struck my eyes,
A sense of utter tragedy within me grew
That hill and lake and wood and summer skies
No better message brought my tirèd brain
Than Nature's broken words of endless pain.

It was so sad to see, my eyes I close.
And quick they open to another scene:
Sweet as Dawn's breath, a wind melodious blows,
And all that is gives place to what has been.
Across the waters elfin music falls,
And from the hills a fairy trumpet calls.

From sunlit belfries bells of silver ring,
Soft anthems fill the spacious loneliness.
I see them pass, abbot and bard and king.
And my sad sense of life grows less and less.
I look at the drawn lattice of the skies
And gleams of healing beauty touch my eyes.

I leap to earth from Fancy's golden car,
And face again the rugged now and here.
Life's law is clear: its charm must be afar,
Its mists and rains and winds forever near.
And still the lake its wordless music plays:
"Ah! for a moment of my yesterdays."

ICI-AU-DELA

(Here and There.)

PEOPLE come and go—
It was always so;
Lives, as rivers, flow.

Nothing with us stays,
Long or short the days,
All things go their ways.

Sorrows pass and wrong:
Laughter a short song:
Nothing bides for long.

* * * *

In life's rushing car
Passengers all are,
Going fast and far.

Fields and woods and streams—
Fair their vision seems,
Glimmerings of dreams.

* * * *

One day we shall rest
In a hostel blest:
Good will then be best.

All we loving know
Staying shall not go:
Always, always so.

April 14th, 1913.

AFTER

THE beauty of those foreign lands that call
With loving voice to those who know their story,
Subdues our spirits to its splendid thrall
And binds us fast within the spell of glory.

Yet all the classic charm is set in places
Where life is alien to the Northern soul;
Earth's noblest work was done by mighty races
Sundered from us as pole from distant pole!

The air that vests them in their robes of sun
Gives us the leper garb of heats and chills;
Bandusian fountains as they limpid run
Choke with strange weed the runlet of our wills.

Better to hear them sing in lovely songs
Which turn their music into poet's measures;
Higher the charm that to their thought belongs,
Than with our hands to count their coined treasures!

And so tho' they are now so far away
They still are dearer to my inner sight;
Brighter in the dim gloom of fancy's day
Than when I saw them in their native light.

I see the fairy cupolas more fair
Within this shadowed room than when my eyes
Followed them up into the lucent air
And easy leapt into the waiting skies.

And ruins that like precious flotsam lie
Upon the shores of time, telling who sees
The tragedy of peoples doomed to die,
Lost in the storm, leaving no trace but these:

I see them all within this evening's glooms;
The silence brooding on the Sacred Street,
The Appian trudging thro' its path of tombs,
The vanquished Forum kissing history's feet!

And now when all my wander years are done
I daily break thro' the thick hedge of home;
In the cold sky I see the southern sun,
In the chill air I feel the breath of Rome.

And fairer worlds within me now are wrought
Than by the Middle Seas I long have known:
Sense-things become the subtler things of thought,
No longer lent, but now my very own.

November 18th, 1913.

SEROTINA

(Night Thoughts.)

THE heart of a long day has ceased to beat,
And all the fires he kindled now burn low;
Cold grows into our brains and tirèd feet,
And hearts are beating slow.

And I have lived the day, and now the night
Calls to me with her plaintive voice, and asks:
What hast thou done with all the gifts of light,
What were thy day-time tasks?

What were thy hopes when morning lit the East,
And what thy deeds when noontide fill'd the heaven;
Did some high purpose with its tingling yeast
Life's inert matter leaven?

Wert thou still brave in hours of greater trial,
And braver still in hours of paltry fight;
Fell full God's light once on thy garden dial,
Thy shadows waning quite?

Didst thou despise life's lowly, sordid gains,
And trample on thyself to reach thy heights:
Didst thou embrace the purifying pains,
And spurn the low delights?

If such thy day, then fear not the short lull
Of conscious duty in thy sleeping soul;
Ev'n now life's noiseless current floweth full,
Bearing thee to thy goal.

BELLI DOMIQUE

THROUGH wasting days the fiery breath of war
Has blasted mart and temple, street and home.
The white roads weary of the funeral car,
And Death himself is tired—so many come.

The nations by God made for vital strength
Have madly pierced the cistern of red blood
Whose course should urge to fuller width and length
The flowing arteries of human good.

The wheels of life are buried in the sand
That covers ever the Libya of hate.
Not even in evil now can men be grand,
In these dead days dead things alone are great.

On field the mammoth gun, and on the deep
Leviathans proclaim how great is steel:
Matter is mad with joy as dead birds sweep
The depths above us with a swallow keel.

And man lies fallen from his high estate,
No common bond cements the common race,
The Christ alone can be divinely great
Upon the mount of skulls, the Calvary place.

The sons of men are stretchèd on a cross
That holds no healing in its iron veins.
Only the Son of Man finds gain in loss,
And endless glory in redeeming pains.

REQUIEM

I LATE have been among the lovely places
Where once my life was lived and work was done,
And found so many voices, many faces
Hushèd and into shadow gone.

If I should now desire to have them near me,
I may not seek them where they used to work—
I needs must go where they nor see nor hear me
In their low cell of death and dark.

There should I speak of the dear days now over,
The grief were mine alone. All, all in vain
Should I recite the psalm of life, for never
Will they its anthem sing again.

They lived in cloistered homes—a narrow cell
Saw all their hidden soul and mystic worth:
Sweet flowers from the tree of life they fell
In silence on the perfumed earth.

They lived awhile, then silent went away
To farther life, and scarcely now remains
A little memory of their short day
Of willing losses, lasting gains.

I go into the churches where they sang—
No shadow limns them on the pictured floor;
Into the schools where once their voices rang
In rich dispute—but now no more!

They all are gone into the better land
Where faith is crowned with a lasting love;
They sought truth here, beyond they understand,
God's servants here, they reign above.

And I who pass where once they walked in peace,
When a few further years have passed and gone,
For me, too, life's incessant call will cease,
My eyes all blank, my face all wan.

Then may some other of my memory say
As I of these my friends, the lost and best:
A faithful worker in his passing day,
May he, too, in God's vision rest.

PIUS X

OUR eyes were fixed upon the marching men
Who bravely stepped across war's fatal bourne,
"Farewell," we said, "until we meet again,"
Nor hoped for their return.

The withering hail of fire who can withstand?
In the loud clash of swords what hope for them?
We saw their waiting graves on sea and land,
And breathed a requiem.

None feared for the High Priest with raisèd hand
Who, trembling on his parapet of years,
Blest God's redeemèd world—he seemed beyond
The reach of mortal fears.

Now he is dead, while they in soldier pride
Furbish the sabre and caress the gun;
Bravely they march and fearlessly they ride
Under the Autumn sun:

And he lies cold in death whose Pontiff word
Alone could bridge war's crimson, sundering tide;
He saw unsheathed the fratricidal sword,
And in the vision died.

Full many a home despairing loss shall know
Ere the red battle-flag again is furled;
Now war with one unseen initial blow
Has widowed all the world.

September 1st, 1914.

CONFITEOR

YOU ask me why do I sing and sing,
For songs all end in naught;
Ideals are ever so safe on the wing,
So high in the cloudland of thought:
The facts are fixèd and must remain,
The fardel is tied to the back,
Our life is only a process of pain,
And man is screwed to the rack!

I see the ugliness of the face,
And the empty heart within,
And I know my singing will not erase
The endless record of sin.
And yet I sing of the better world,
Of the cause that cannot die;
I follow the flag that is never furled
On the battlements of the sky.

I know it all, and yet, and yet,
I see in the heart of things
The light of a sun that can never set
And a flutter of tireless wings;
A touch of His hand Who made us all,
A beauty that ever must be;—
And thence come the voices that call and call
And beckon forever to me.

I see the nations with iron and blood
Crush down the poor and the weak,
And yet I know of their vision of good,
I see it and I must speak.
I know my lips are not touched with fire,
And yet God's message I tell:
This earth is a place where spirits aspire,
And despair is the worm of hell.

When flowers wilt I sing of the rose
That never shall wither away;
In sleepless vigils I sing of repose,
In the dark, of the endless day.
I sing of the little, for life is of such;
And little our right and our wrong;
I fain would burnish them with my touch
And colour them with my song.

The measure of life is the measure of song,
Else false is the man who sings;
Or his eye is keen and his heart is strong
Else vain are the swallow's wings.
I live the life of the heart and the home,
And there is my song and my joy.
I had rather be Horace and sing of Rome
Than Virgil and sing of Troy.

AT DUSK

AT dusk four people walk
Beneath two ranks of trees,
Settling in talk
Their differences.

The trees like bells are stirred,
Their soul in prayer heaves
Up heavenward—
As one believes.

One sees a viewless space,
And glimpses now and then
The gentle race
Of faerymen.

One sees in light benign
God's hyacinthine hand,
His lucent sign
Over the land.

One sees the cruel shade
Of battle everywhere
Wondering who made
A lie so fair.

One sees in every leaf
Swaying in evening's breath
Life green and brief
Awaiting death.

One hears thro' all the land
Around the passing day
The elfin band
A requiem play.

So in the dusk they walk
Between two ranks of trees,
Settling in talk
Their differences.

August, 1922.

WAITING—NOCTURNE

ABOVE the woods night waves her wand,
And sends them dreams they may not tell;
Only the west wind's Merlin hand
Can lift the faery spell.

The rivers nothing sing or say
To listening banks or dreaming mills;
They wait the rains whose fingers play
The song of silent hills.

The poet lives thro' songless ease,
He waits the freshets from above:
His hushèd woods await the breeze
Of rustling hate and love.

June 28th, 1922.

THE CITY

Dublin from the south-west.

I SIT up here in my window
And look on the steeples and domes
That in the June glow are glittering so,
And I hear the soft summer wind blow
Over men's numberless homes!

I see the quays where the river
Is hurrying on to the sea
And white things and black are sending me back
New thoughts as if from its quiver
The city shot arrows at me!

I see the phantoms that march her
Streets since the far distant days;
The Celt and the Viking, the serf and the high king,
Captain and pikeman and archer,
Silently pass as I gaze!

I see the proud Norman prancing
Knit to the back of his steed;
I hear in the street the Puritan feet,
I see the gay cavalier dancing;
I see the Irishry bleed!

I see all the pageant of story
Deploy through streets that forget:
But the spirit that dwells in the home of the bells
Remembers loud moments of glory
That broke the long hush of regret.

May it be that Time's shuttle is weaving
O city of laughter and rue,
Of thy new and thy old, of thy rags and thy gold,
Of thy doubting, and of thy believing,
A destiny worthy of you!

POST PASCHA

(Dublin, April 27th, 1916.)

WHO let him pass, the foul usurper, Death?
For high on Easter's gates his ensigns float:
The dazed streets feel his hot sulphurous breath,
His crimson hand is on our city's throat.

He is no grinning skeleton to-day,
The lust of battle fills his kindled eyes,
No hand his devastating march can stay
Who wins whoever kills, whoever dies.

No wasted hand holds up that polished gun,
No parchèd lips could give that battle note:
The shriek of shrapnel to the veilèd sun
Is the all vital rattle in his throat.

Our day is setting at its noon of strength,
Our youth is ebbing at its fullest tide,
As life is straining to its farthest length
Nerveless and shortened men lie side by side.

This is the early harvest of the sword,
The shining scythe in Death's relentless hand:
While crouching fire-fiends wait his sovereign word,
And all the furies wake at his command.

Life runs to-day thro' all the veins of Spring,
And Pan is tuning everywhere his flute:
Before our doors Death passes like a King,
And we are standing stiff at the salute.

O NAVIS

(Horace. Odes i, xvi.)

O SHIP that bearest all our hopes,
The dark seas call thee. Wilt thou go?
Art thou so blind that yielding ropes
And swaying masts and waiting foe
Awaken in thy soul no dread?
Withstand the breakers' lure, and show
That Roman genius is not dead.

Thou art not in thy buoyant prime,
On thee lies history's warping stress:
Now is the measured point of time
To choose the more and hold the less.
Beyond the bar the breakers roar,
Be wise in this thy hour. Confess
Thy need of rest. Hold fast the shore.

Thine is the grace of a long past,
Heaven blessed thy reverential years;
But boast not that thy name *must* last:
The Sibyl sees, the Sibyl fears.
Trust not the ocean's mocking face,
Wise is the hand that boldly steers
Into the harbour's waiting place.

My soul is anguished for thee now,
Trembling I read thy lines of fate.
Take heart of courage, turn thy prow
To honoured rest, O Ship of State.
Give not thy keel to shining seas,
Hold to thy anchorage, and wait.
Dead Romans haunt the Cyclades.

ARTHUR GRIFFITH

"Quis te Palinure, deorum
Eripuit nobis."—Virgil. Aeneid Lib. vi.

IN these full days when all our sinews strain
To hold aloft the fortune of our race,
Across the nation rolls a wave of pain
That hides all other sense of loss and gain.
Now sorrow stands in victory's pride of place,
And glorious deeds seem profitless and vain.

Our Master Pilot has fallen before our eyes:
He sleeps in death's inexorable grip.
Who now will read for us the uncharted skies,
Who now will guide us in our great emprise
When stars betray and constellations dip
Beyond our ken, and Palinurus* dies!

* The pilot of Aeneas in his voyage to Italy. Within sight of land he mysteriously fell into the sea and was lost to the expedition.

His soul was native to the realm of mind,
Of reason's gates he held the master-keys:
No flashing fallacies his vision blind,
He grasped the core of things and left the rind.
He followed fixèd stars across the seas,
His strength the intact sense of human-kind.

Silent as all life's finest forces are,
Calmly he faced the tasks of every day.
He grasped the quintessential things that mar
Or make a commonwealth. He knew no star
Can save us from the cost that peoples pay
For freedom in the shame and loss of war.

He touched the harbour's bar. He perished there.
He rounded siren rock and shifting sand—
Led on by Freedom's dream and promise fair
He conquered failure, treason and despair,
And now he may not see the glory of his land.
And in her years of kingdom will not share!

O Master Pilot, dead beside the mast,
Thou shalt not sleep in time's forgetting waves.
Thy name will live! for in thee all our past
And all our future meet. Fear not, thou hast
Full right to one of the immortal graves
Where sleep the master-men whose fame will last.

Dublin, August 15th, 1922.

MICHAEL COLLINS

"With one of his hands he did the work,
With the other he held the sword."
Esdras ii, 4.

BRAVE of her brave the life she gave
He rendered to the Motherland
And takes her saddest gift, an early grave.
Fallen in fratricidal strife
A felon fate has struck his life,
And with an Irish hand.

He lived, died well! He stood and fell
As heroes stand and fight and fall.
Our annals with a wondering pen will tell
How fast he mounted glory's height
While the dark shuttles of the night
Still faster wove his pall.

Glorious his name! His meteor fame
Will shine when we are driven dust.
On our dark day will rest a weight of shame;
We could not keep a soul so good,
Our brothers thirsted for his blood,
He hungered for their trust.

Fighting he built! On his sword-hilt
One hand with one free hand he wrought.
When dreamers laid their plans on sand and silt
He built for storm and earthquake shock,
The Nation's will his granite rock,
His plan her measured thought.

His soldier soul has paid the toll
That opens Fame's Triumphal Way.
Not all in grief we hear the sad drums roll:
For no dead cause has Collins died,
Hope stands erect by Sorrow's side
And sees the coming day.

Dublin, August 27th, 1922.

THE SOUTH POLE

" Ne Parce Malignis."—Horace. Odes i, 28.

THEY touched the limit of their great emprise;
The Pole hath felt at last a conscious touch.
Earth's unseen axle turns before their eyes,
Glory is in their clutch!

When lo! they find that man had set his seal
Upon the treasure they had hoped to find;
Clear letters done by human hand reveal
A quicker march of mind!

Across the floes and crevasses forlorn
A step had passed than theirs more strong and flee
And all that had been done and dreamed and born
Brings them but high defeat.

They grave their names upon the alien Pole
Then turned their faces toward the homing star;
Triumphant failure brooded o'er each soul,
For halves as nothing are.

Their work was finished when death softly came,
And laid them on the snow's embalming breast;
There in the fixèd comeliness of fame
The vanquished victors rest.

Dublin, February 27th, 1913.

LA BASSE MARÉE

(Neap Tide.)

EVERY drop of the tide is out,
Not a shimmer of sea in the dock,
Not a paper boat of my fleet is afloat—
All is sand and weed and rock.

Will the young sea ever come back?
Will the prodigal sea return?
My eyes are afar on the rim of the bar,
Where the desolate mermen mourn.

Shall I see the waves ever again,
Shall I ever be taut and new,
And, awake and alive, like a seagull dive
Into life's bottomless blue?

I lie on the feverish sand,
Nor know where the moon is outing—
But ah! for the surf and the ships at the wharf,
And the sailors and seagulls shouting.

But my heart with the tide is out,
And my soul is dry as the dock;
I see but the reach of the desolate beach,
With its sand and weed and rock.

IN BOHEMIA

(From the French.)

WE are the gentry of Bohemian stock—
They laugh at us, but like us well withal;
Far from the dusty pike we love to walk,
With careless step and air fantastical.

For us, to whom no logic ever matters,
Whose wills distraught can never hit the mark,
For us, at night, the lake's orchestral waters
Play with the elfin band of storm and dark.

Moments come to us of unreasoned pleasure,
Or else despair swoops down on us unsought;
We go on singing in responsive measure,
Now lilts of joy, now cries of sombre thought.

Our tastes, our ways, our lawless fancies shock
The honest people who possess the land,
For are we not of that Bohemian stock
Which no one yet could ever understand?

THE CRACKED BELL

" La Cloche Félée."—Charles Baudelaire.

HOW sad, how sweet, when someone, sudden, hears,
By Winter fireside in the swaying light,
The plaintive voices of the vanished years
Rise with the Bells that carol through the night.

Ah! happy bells, whose vigour is unspent,
Venerable, old, alert as in your prime,
Awake, like an old soldier in his tent,
You watch the hour to wake your solemn chime.

Alas! my Bell is cracked, when I am fain
To people the lone night with songs of pain,
It gives, at times, a weird and broken note,
Like the thick rattle in the soldier's throat
When he, beneath the slain, forgotten lies,
And rigid, stiff, still fights for life, and dies.

August 10th, 1921.

BEFORE SLEEP

I.

I STAND upon the brink
Of worlds that sudden slope beyond my sight,
Where men and women walk
Through the dead night,
Where shadows talk,
And ghosts and spectres think!

I go into a land
Where all the lines of life run farther on,
Where parallels may meet
And merge in one,
Where death is sweet,
And warm life's vanished hand.

And all so real will be,
And faces, voices, seen in sleep will grow
So true to vital law,
I shall not know
Where first I saw
The things that I shall see.

2.

In quiet pause I wait
  For him whose instant voice will end the rout
That fills the streets of day
  With riot and shout;
And I shall stay
  Where sleep holds gentle state.

And then the sweet release
  From the hard shafts that drag day's stress and
    fear;
And I shall draw a car
  Of gossamer
Along the far
  And endless roads of peace!

THE BARN

MY fields have had their harvesting,
I needs must house my homing grain,
Else sowing, reaping, winnowing
Were all in vain!

Why plough the furrows of the Spring,
Why harrow life with waiting pain,
If the short days no guerdon bring,
If naught remain?

Why should the minstrel sing and sing,
Through dawn and dark, through wind and rain,
If every note should break the string
That bore his strain?

Why fashion well a transient thing,
Why trawl the sea with open seine,
Why flying break the soaring wing
Again and again?

My book, my barn, herein I fling
My sacks of song. And I am fain
To put my little harvesting
On every wain

Whose master at my door will ring
And ask a measure of my grain.
Then I shall know if I can sing
Or sing in vain.

February 2nd, 1922.

DUBLIN NIGHTS

August, 1922

IN the lone woods of night,
Where hushèd monotones
Fill with delight
Life's weary ones,

I heard the heavy tread
Of battle's trooper feet,
I saw the dead
And living meet.

Thro' the dim aisles of sleep
Crouch things that sicken sight,
Foul shadows creep
In the low light.

Gone is the solemn hush,
Quenchèd life's vestal fires,
The Vandals crush
All that aspires.

Love's altars fall amain,
Struck by the savage hand,
And blood-drops stain
The gentle land.

Our nation's eyes dilate
With maniac disease,
We celebrate
Hate's mysteries.

Guns preach their gospel fell,
Death unto death makes call:
Who dares foretell
What shall befall?

REMINISCENCE

Soir d'été

THE unseen Summer's feet
Tread on the velvet air,
Shadow the street,
Silence the square.

Time on a folded wing
Crosses the fading sky,
Joy will not sing,
Pain gives no cry.

All sound were violence
To the deep spell of Rest
That pillowed sense
Upon her breast.

And trees, and men, and moon,
Tho' many, were but one,
Singing one tune
In unison:

Night touched her gossamer string
And bade our tunèd keys
To listen and sing
Her silences.

May 23rd, 1922.

AFTER—

WHEN all life's stir and all light's glow
Has died away from earth and air.
When naught is high and naught is low,
When all the more and all the less
Is lost in formless nothingness
Where hope has ended and despair.

What then shall be our planet's fate?
The woods are gone with night and morn;
Silence reigns early, stayeth late;
All man has risen from the dust.
And viewless ruin gnaws the crust
Where homes once stood and men were born:

What will the rivers be? the seas?
Will the hills dwindle to the plains?
Will there be beauty none to please?
Will there be music none to hear?
Will there be sorrow where no tear
Can fall upon death's futile pains?

No eye shall see, no mind descry
The utter void of emptiness;
No day reveals the fallen sky,
No cloud, no wind, no rain, no star,
Touches the near or lights the far.
And Time's dark steed is riderless.

PRINTED BY GARDEN CITY PRESS, LETCHWORTH, ENGLAND.

S0-BQL-787